

Full of Sound and Fury

Story: Full of Sound and Fury

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Summary: Oneshot. He tastes of sea salt and broken promises, and though Jenna knows that this won't end well, she cannot bring herself to care. Alex/Jenna.

***Chapter 1*: Full of Sound and Fury**

Notes: Golden Sun isn't mine, etc.

Full of Sound and Fury

There is nothing beautiful about Alhafra.

Jenna never expected that there would be. The city sleeps, and she doesn't need Sheba's telepathy to know that it dreams of wealth. The sense of need hangs heavily in the air, and she marvels at how one person's greed can so easily corrupt an entire population. Uncomfortable in such a place, she finds herself unable to rest.

Alhafra is not beautiful at night, and as she tiptoes out of the inn, careful not to awaken the others, she is drawn towards the quiet edges of the city. Sharp glass and ruined pieces of wood are scattered across the shore, and she senses that broken dreams lay hidden beneath. Making her way towards the sea, Jenna is forced to keep her eyes on the ground. A soft breeze is blowing across the water, but it does little to ease her mood. She is disgusted that a city so obsessed with its image would not even spare the effort to keep itself presentable.

She spots a familiar figure near the edge of the surf, and feels her jaw clench.

He is standing still, a vision painted in every shade of blue, perfectly at ease in this city of thieves. He gazes at the ocean as a king does over his people, and it is obvious that he believes he possesses every last gallon of it. Even the sudden harsh gush of wind rushing across the shore does little to disturb his elegance.

Jenna hates him for that.

She's barely conscious of the steps she is taking towards him, and doesn't think to turn away until it is much too late. Alex glances in her direction, a small, infuriatingly perfect smile upon deceitful lips. He nods slightly with a graciousness that may or may not be feigned, and murmurs, "My dear, it's a pleasure to see you."

For once, Jenna is without words. She detests the endearment, still unable to tell whether he is being polite, condescending, or something altogether different. She simply stares at him, trying to ignore the waves lapping at her feet as the tide comes in. Surrounded by water and in the company of an unfathomable Mercury Adept, she is beginning to feel somewhat vulnerable.

Alex laughs softly, his voice as musical as ever. "Silence does not become you, Jenna."

There is only one thing Jenna can think to say, and she spits it out before she manages to stop herself, "I hate you."

A perfect, blue eyebrow raises, and Jenna expects a dozen scathing responses. She knows that this night will not end well; Alex has always known exactly how to best get under her skin. She believes that there is more to it than elemental weaknesses.

"I know," he replies simply, his voice almost too soft to be heard over the roar of water and wind. For a moment, Jenna is convinced that she misunderstood. But then Alex continues, "For what it's worth, I am sorry," and she is almost certain that his sincerity is real.

"Well, isn't that great?" Jenna replies sarcastically, the bitterness of dozens of ruined memories coming to the front

of her mind.

She had believed, at first, that he was different. That he had fallen into this mad adventure by accident, roped into it perhaps as her own brother had been. And Alex had done little to disabuse her of the idea, always smooth and charming where the others had been coarse and unpleasant. His words and mannerisms were as understanding and sympathetic as those of any healer from the mythical Mercury Clan, and Jenna had *believed*.

She isn't certain what has changed in him. Perhaps nothing at all.

"My dear..." Alex begins, and she cuts him off before he can get any further. He has a way with words that always leaves her reeling, uncertain of where she stands.

"No," she states sharply, shaking her head. "I don't want to hear it. You're sick, Alex," she informs him bluntly; word games are not her style. "There's something eating at you... not like the Proxians. Worse. I don't know..."

"You don't?" Alex murmurs, his tone a play in polite incredulity. An instant later, he is standing behind her, and she isn't sure whether he warped or if she simply wasn't paying attention. He rests gloveless fingers on her shoulder, and she can feel his pulse beating strongly against her cloak. Blood rushing beneath his skin, so much water, so much life...

"It's beautiful, isn't it?" he comments worshipfully, distracting her from her reverie.

"What?" she manages, hating how uncertain she sounds. *It's not my fault I don't follow Alex Logic*, she reminds herself angrily.

"The ocean," he clarifies, but all Jenna can think about is the weight of his fingers against her skin, and the rich, salty scent of him: so similar to the ocean breeze, and yet so distinctly *Alex*.

"I'm a Mars Adept," Jenna points out irritably, "I don't particularly care for the ocean." *I don't particularly care for you*, she adds silently, but for the moment, with him so maddeningly near, she can't make herself believe it.

"Even so... you must feel its power," Alex says, his breath brushing against the side of her neck. "Eternal, encompassing everything, older than even our most ancient civilizations. Even a king must feel small," – and he laughs, though there is no amusement in his voice – "*insignificant* beside it."

Jenna finally pulls away, and reaches down to cup a portion of seawater between her hands. "Is that what this is about?" she asks, finding that her anger has mostly bled away. "You left us because you wanted..." she shakes her head, still not quite certain of how this fits together.

"Everything," he replies with a quiet intensity that Jenna finds vaguely disturbing.

Fighting down a shiver, she comments sharply, "I doubt you even know what everything is."

"No," Alex admits easily, and Jenna is surprised by his sudden honesty. "But I plan to live long enough to find out."

"You're crazy," Jenna tells him bluntly, unwilling to consider the implications of what he is trying to tell her. Standing up, the water still pooled between her hands, she turns back to him. "And you're wrong." She opens her hands, and the water spills out onto the ground. She watches in silence as

the tiny droplets are swallowed by the sand at their feet.
"The ocean is not one single thing, and it's not eternal. Not in the way you're thinking of, at least. It's always changing, always moving, and each droplet is... *small and insignificant.*"

Alex's lips quirk into a smile, and he shakes his head slightly.
"I didn't think you had it in you, my dear."

She rolls her eyes but doesn't complain. As twisted as it may be, it is still a compliment. "That's because you're too self-centred to pay attention to anyone else."

Alex frowns slightly, and the expression looks out of place on his otherwise serene face. "That's not quite fair," he protests half-heartedly.

Jenna bites her tongue before she can point out exactly how much here is unfair. She thinks of the gentle words he once spoke to her, the way he made her almost forget that she had only been taken hostage at his suggestion. She remembers how confused and upset she was at first, and how deftly he had managed to wrap her around his fingers. The memory is painful, humiliating, and she isn't sure whom she blames more.

In another world, one without lighthouses and the promise of alchemy, perhaps things might have been otherwise. Alex would have been content with the simple rewards life offered, and would not have seen the need to view people as tools. Perhaps in a different life, this would have been more than just a lie.

"I hate you," she says again, softly and less passionately this time, but no less heartfelt.

She shuts her eyes and for an instant feels soft, smooth lips against her own. He tastes of sea salt and broken promises, and though Jenna knows that this won't end well, she cannot bring herself to care. He whispers a reply and warps away, and she is left standing alone on a deserted shore, his final words echoing in the wind.

"I know."

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